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A Small-Town Drama
Of Life, Love and DeathBy FOX BUTTERFIELD
Special to The New York Times

★ DERRY, N.H. — Pamela Smart's license plate reads "Halen," and her dog is named Halen. The name, friends say, reflects her passion for the heavy-metal rock band Van Halen, whose hit rock video "Hot for Teacher" featured a high school teacher who appeared to seduce her students.

For the 23-year-old Mrs. Smart, it was a case of life imitating art, the authorities say. Last summer, she was charged with persuading three high school students, including one identified as her lover, to kill her husband in their condominium here on Misty Morning Lane.

Mrs. Smart, a former high school honors student and cheerleader, has pleaded not guilty to being an accomplice to first-degree murder. She said in a television interview before her arrest that her husband, Gregory, a life insurance salesman, must have been shot to death by "some jerk, some drug addict person looking for a quick 10 bucks" who had broken into their apartment last May 1.

But Monday, a week before Mrs. Smart is scheduled to go on trial for soliciting the teen-agers to kill her husband, the three pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.

The three are William Flynn, 16 years old, said to be Mrs. Smart's lover; Patrick Randall, 17, and Vance Lattime, 18, all of Seabrook, according to Paul Maggiotto, an assistant state attorney general. A fourth youth, Raymond Fowler, 19, of Seabrook, was arrested Monday on charges that he had been involved in an earlier attempt to kill Gregory Smart.

Mr. Flynn's lawyer, Jeffrey M. Kaye, said the three students had originally been charged with first-degree murder, which carries a mandatory life sentence, but had been allowed to plead guilty to the lesser charge, which carries a sentence of up to life in prison. The reduction was part of an agreement with prosecutors that the youths testify at Mrs. Smart's trial, Mr. Kaye said.

"William Flynn may have held the gun that tragic evening, but he may not have been the only one responsible for pulling the trigger," Mr. Kaye said. Mr. Kaye said Mr. Flynn "was deeply in love with her, and everything that entails for a 16-year-old who is very inexperienced when it came to women."

The case has mesmerized this bedroom community in southern New Hampshire. By coincidence, Derry is not far from the group of small towns that served as the model for Grace Metalious's best-selling 1956 novel, "Peyton Place," about sex and family intrigue in New Hampshire.

Mrs. Smart taught in Hampton, near the Atlantic Coast, at the Winnecunnet Regional High School. The principal, Roberta G. Neuman, said extra counselors have been hired to

help students deal with psychological problems. The school has drawn up rules for how students and teachers should deal with reporters, lawyers and the police, she said.

What has made the case even more fascinating, and psychologically complicated for those involved, was that still another 16-year-old student cooperated with the police in getting evidence against Mrs. Smart. The student, Cecelia Pierce of Seabrook, had worked as an intern for Mrs. Smart and had once walked in on her as she was making love with Mr. Flynn in the Smarts' bedroom while her husband was away, prosecutors say.

After the killing, Ms. Pierce agreed to wear a hidden recording device while meeting with Mrs. Smart, prosecutors say.

Cynthia White, an assistant state attorney general, said in court that on one of the tape-recorded conversations Mrs. Smart had cautioned Ms.

A killing and a scandal mesmerize the countryside.

Pierce against talking to the police. "You'd be better off just lying to the police," Mrs. Smart was supposed to have said. "We'd go to the slammer for the rest of our lives."

In the recorded conversation, according to Ms. White, Mrs. Smart mused that "this would have been the perfect murder" if one of the teen-agers had not begun to boast about the crime to friends, who repeated his remarks to the police.

Ms. Pierce has sold the rights to her account of the episode to Hollywood, for \$100,000, she testified in court last week. "One-hundred thousand dollars is an interesting amount of money for a 16-year-old," said Mark Sisti, Mrs. Smart's lawyer, who suggested that Ms. Pierce had a financial interest in testifying against his client.

In another twist, Mrs. Smart is charged with criminal solicitation of murder. Prosecutors say she tried to persuade a cellmate to kill Ms. Pierce.

Ms. White, the assistant attorney general, said in court that Mrs. Smart's motive in killing her husband was also financial. The prosecutor said Mrs. Smart was afraid that if he found out about her affair and divorced her, "he would take all the furniture, the dog and leave her with no place to live."

Judith Smart, Mr. Smart's mother, said the killing was "so bizarre we just won't ever understand how this could happen."

Linda Wojas, Mrs. Smart's mother, said she believes her daughter is innocent. "All of this is hearsay from juveniles," she said. Her daughter, she said, "loved Greg very much and still does."